

# extinguishers

## The PASS Word Will Save Your Life

Many workplaces have portable fire extinguishers, but how many employees actually know how to use them? If a fire broke out in your work area, would you know how to put it out with an extinguisher?

Portable fire extinguishers contain substances which smother or cool fires and are designed to put out small fires before they become large ones. They should be installed in plain view near an escape route, away from fire hazards and equipment.

There are four major kinds of extinguishers, each designed to put out different kinds of fires. It's important to use the right one for the job.

Type A extinguishers put out fires involving ordinary combustibles such as wood, cloth, paper, rubber, and some plastics. This is the most common type of fire. The extinguishers usually contain pressurized water.

Type B extinguishers are meant to fight fires involving flammable liquids such as gasoline, oil, grease, tar, oil-based paint, lacquer or flammable gas. This is the second most frequent kind of fire. Like Type C, these extinguishers often hold carbon dioxide or dry chemicals.

Type C extinguishers will put out fires of electrical equipment including wiring, fuse boxes, circuit breakers, machinery and appliances.

Type D extinguishers are made to fight fires that occur in certain industrial settings involving combustible metals such as magnesium and sodium. Only qualified firefighters should attempt to put these out.

Some fire extinguishers put out more than one kind of fire and are labelled this way. An ABC extinguisher, for example, will put out most fires.

The first thing to do when you notice a fire is to sound the alarm and call the fire department. If you do not feel that you can safely handle a fire, leave immediately. Also get everyone else out of the building. Close the doors behind you to slow the spread of the flames. Stay between the fire and an exit so you don't let the fire block your escape.

Only use a fire extinguisher if you know how to use it and the fire is small. Otherwise, leave the job to the experts.

"PASS" is an easily remembered abbreviation describing a four-step process to operate most fire

extinguishers: Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep.

**PULL.** Pull the pin. On some extinguishers, you may have to release a latch or press a lever. **AIM.** Aim the nozzle of the extinguisher at the base of the fire.

**SQUEEZE.** Squeeze or press the handle. Or, you may have to press a button. This discharges the extinguishing agent.

**SWEEP.** Sweep the extinguisher from side to side, aiming at the base of the fire until the flames appear to be out. Repeat the procedure if the fire reappears.

Don't turn your back on the fire once you think it is out because it could flare up again. Also, avoid breathing the smoke, fumes or extinguishing agent.

Take care of your portable extinguisher and recharge it after each use. It should be regularly serviced and inspected.

*You can aid in putting out small fires by knowing where a fire extinguisher is and how to use it. However, if you have any doubts about the procedure or the fire is too big exit the building and leave the rest to the fire department.*

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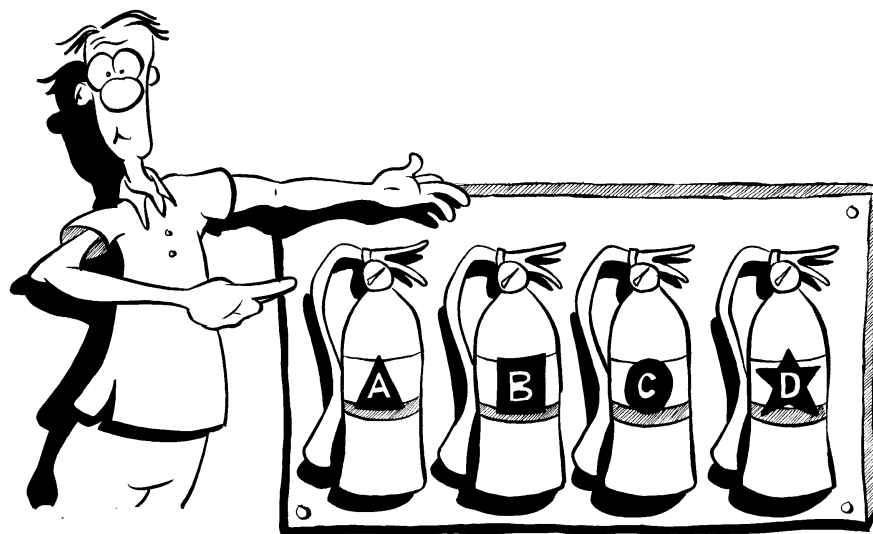
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